

Stakeholder forum – meeting note

Held online –Tuesday 14 June 2022 10:00am - Noon

Attendees:

Charlene Brooks	Parenting NI - Chairperson
Andrea Brown	Disability Action NI
Mary T Conway	Omagh Forum for Rural Associations
Catherine Cooke	Foyle Women’s Information Network
Denise Copeland	NICVA
Conor Flanagan	Supporting Communities
Denise Hayward	Volunteer Now, for George Gillespie
Clare Jenner	Parentkind
Nicole Lappin	CCNI – Chief Commissioner, for Gerry McCurdy
Louise Little	North Down community Network
Bill Megraw	County Down Rural Community Network
Diarmuid Moore	Early Years
Derek Powell	Causeway Rural & Urban Network
Ann Breslin	CCNI – PDM, Notetaker.

By invitation: Frances Mc Candless (CCNI, Chief Executive) to present information to forum.

Valerie McCloskey (DfC Engagement team) to observe feedback on the Commission’s draft strategic plan.

Apologies:

Gerry McCurdy (CCNI – Deputy Chief Commissioner), George Gillespie (Volunteer Now); Cara McCann (HEReNI), Ashleigh Roberts (EBCDA).

Catherine Cooke had to leave the meeting at 11.30am.

Ref	Item	Action point/Decision
1.	Apologies. Chairperson welcomed Clare Jenner to the meeting as the new representative for Parentkind.	
2.	Note of meeting. Correction to misspelling of Bill Megraw’s name. Due to apologies being received close to the beginning of the meeting Derek Powell was recorded as both attendee and with apologies. Discussion re etiquette when members receive the draft notes. If they have a query do they follow up with Ann,	Decision: Note of meeting accepted. Agreed that an inaccuracy in the draft notes should be corrected immediately via an email to Ann.

	<p>copying members in, or do they wait and raise it at the next meeting, which could be a couple of months away?</p> <p>Question: Following high level presentation about new AMR questions at meeting on 08 March 2022 a question was asked whether anyone answering 'yes' to the new question on using a commercial fundraiser, would have follow up questions to answer. In follow up email reply was that currently if a charity replies 'Yes' to this question there is no further drop down with a follow up question. Unfortunately the IT is so far along that we won't be able to amend this question at this stage but it has been logged for the future.</p> <p>But this issue was raised in the consultation about the new OLAR/AMR questions but is not referred to in the Consultation report. Which raises the question are responses to consultations being heard and if they are not adopted can we understand why.</p> <p>From A.O.B: Proposal to have further discussion on providing information on structures, other than being a charity, which could be used by organisations. Perhaps set up a working group on this topic?</p>	<p>Where there is a question that requires a response it should be brought up at the next meeting so that all embers are aware of it creating a feedback loop.</p> <p>AP1: Nicole to follow up internally at the Commission re how feedback to consultations and this response in particular was handled. Identify a staff member to attend the next meeting to address this question.</p> <p>Ann – Check if copy of new questions on AMR can be provided to the forum.</p> <p>AP2: Forum to put this proposal to the review meeting planned for 11 August 2022, as part of its discussion on the role of the forum, what it can do, what it can change.</p>
3.	<p>Role of helper groups: Conor provided an over view of the role of helper groups and also provided information on the types of support offered to charities. Including with submitting Expressions of intent to register, registration applications and submitting Annual reports. Also raised the issue of succession planning as one which helper groups need to assist charities to consider.</p>	
	Discussion	

4.	Discussion on expanding the membership of the forum: another open call/co-option.	Decision: Include this discussion at the review meeting on 11 August 2022.
Frances McCandless (CCNI) and Valerie McCloskey (DfC – Engaged Communities) joined the meeting.		
5.	Frances led a discussion in the draft strategic plan 2023 – 2026 based on her presentation which had been circulated earlier. The plan will have four main strategic areas: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Registration of charities 2. Developing as an enabling regulator (including communications recommendations) 3. Developing more proportionate regulation 4. Operating as an effective public body (including recommendations relating to Board and legislative change) 	
	Discussion	
5.	A.O.B Permission to take a photo of the forum members on screen for use in the Commission’s social media posts, aimed at highlighting the work of the stakeholder forum. Commission is developing an Engagement strategy and is carrying out a targeted consultation (of 6 questions) to prepare the draft. Any member of the forum willing to take part please let Ann know.	AP3: members in attendance agreed to this. AP4: Louise agreed at meeting. Email to be circulated to the forum so members can indicate if they wish to participate.

Next meeting: Thursday 11 August 2022, hybrid meeting.

Topic 1: Review of the operation of the forum after one year.

Topic 2: Expanding membership of the forum.

Prepared by: Ann Breslin

Meeting planned for 21 September 2022 was cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances.

Stakeholder forum – meeting note

Held online –Tuesday 14 December 2022 10:00am - Noon

Attendees:

Charlene Brooks	Parenting NI - Chairperson
Gerry McCurdy	CCNI – Deputy Chief Commissioner
Andrea Brown	Disability Action NI
Denise Copeland	NICVA
Denise Hayward	Volunteer Now, for George Gillespie
Clare Jenner	Parentkind
Louise Little	North Down community Network
Bill Megraw	County Down Rural Community Network
Diarmuid Moore	Early Years
Ann Breslin	CCNI – PDM, Notetaker.

Apologies:

Ashleigh Roberts, Conor Flanagan, Cara McCann and George Gillespie

Ref	Item	Action point/Decision
1.	Apologies. Notes of previous meeting	AP1: At preparation meeting Ann to provide update on actions arising from previous meeting to Chairperson. Decision: Note of meeting accepted.
2.	Gerry provided the forum with updates on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recruitment of new Chief Commissioner. - on Charities Act (NI) 2022, especially registration threshold and Scheme of delegation. - Independent review of charity regulation. - Independent review of the Commission’s complaint handling. 	AP1: Chairperson to write to DfC on behalf of the forum to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - warmly welcome the Minister’s decision to introduce a threshold for registration. To encourage a focus on introducing the threshold and overcoming any perceived barriers, so that undue delay in introducing the threshold can be avoided. - urge the introduction of the Scheme of Delegation so that the process of decision making at the Commission can be

	<p>Update was followed by discussion among forum members.</p>	<p>improved and low risk decisions be taken by staff.</p> <p>AP2: Forum members undertook to reply to the consultations on the introduction of a threshold and scheme of delegation that DfC may hold and urge engagement from the sector with these consultations through blogs, vlogs and their usual social media channels.</p> <p>AP3: Ann to enquire from DfC any update on the introduction of Charitable Incorporated Organisation structure in NI.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>Charlene provided: an overview of feedback from the review of the forum and noted the need to review the Terms of Reference re non-attendance and the role of the Vice-Chair.</p> <p>An update and the open call for new members to join the forum. Charlene and Gerry will select new members from the applications. New members will be appointed by mid-February 2023.</p> <p>Updates were followed by discussion among forum members.</p>	<p>AP4: Induction of new members to be carefully planned to ensure clear understanding of their role and Terms of Reference of the forum. To be taken forward by Charlene, Gerry and Ann.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Ann provided an overview how the Commission conducts consultations and reports to respondents on which feedback has been noted, accepted, being considered further or rejected.</p> <p>As part of this discussion aspects of the annual monitoring return, which was consulted on in 2019, were also discussed. When printing off copies of the AMR for trustees their personal data, such as DOB, cannot be redacted or omitted. This puts the charity at risk of breaching its data protection duties.</p>	<p>AP5: Ann to take forward suggestions arising from discussion. For convenience these are listed on Appendix A below.</p> <p>AP6: Ann to raise this with the Head of Compliance and the Commissions data controller.</p>

	<p>RE Annual monitoring return: Is a review of the new AMR planned? Experience of answering the question on safeguarding for charities working overseas – questions are geared towards those charities working in NI. Had to go back and answer the overseas question incorrectly as unable to answer the questions as they currently appear.</p>	<p>AP7: Ann to raise with Head of Compliance.</p>
	<p><i>Good practice suggestions and becoming more enabling:</i> Re Commission website and online systems: One organisations website has an API system which links into CCEW so they can see when annual reports are due etc and can prompt their members to take action.</p> <p>Re: questions or dilemmas charities face – publish case studies on the website which reflect a range of dilemmas and issues and recommendations from the Commission on how to address these: Contact a helper group, hold a meeting of trustees/stakeholders. Also highlight that consequences do not include the charity being unable to continue to operate or lose all the good work they have done in the past.</p>	<p>AP8: Ann to raise with IT and Head of Corporate services for consideration.</p> <p>AP9: Ann to forward this suggestion to the team working on a redesign of the website. Will also consider this as guidance is also redesigned.</p> <p>Decision: Forum to begin publishing a regular blog. To promote the work of the forum and highlight case studies like these.</p>
5.	<p>Feedback from the forum on the newly developed application form and consent letter for general administrative consents</p>	<p>AP10: Ann to provide this feedback to Casework team and follow up some aspects from a policy perspective. See overview of feedback at Appendix B</p>
6.	<p>A.O.B</p> <p>Denise gave a brief update on the Good Governance seminars and thanked the Commission for its</p>	<p>AP11: Ann to confirm date of next meeting of the Forum and to survey members re suitable meeting dates for 2023. So they can be discussed at the Feb 2023 meeting.</p>

	contribution which was welcomed by attendees at the six events.	
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Next meeting: 22 February 2022.

Topic 1: New members **Topic 2:** TBC

Prepared by: Ann Breslin.

Appendix A

Consultations

- Forum agreed it was a good idea to include in the consultation reports an explicit invitation to any resposdee to contact the Commission to enquire why proposals that had been submitted were not adopted by the Commission. This may reduce the experience of the Commission engaging but not listening.
- Ensure any known parameters are stated clearly in the consultation documents, what the givens are, what cannot be changed. This will help to avoid resposdees providing suggestions which the Commission will not be able to fulfill and feeling unheard as a result.
- Consider adding a standard question to all consultations re dilemmas faced by the sector or questions they would like to ask the Commission but don't. These could be submitted anonymously.

AMR

- Suggest using positive wording for questions on the annual monitoring return, for example, do you have data protection policies on place rather than the current question, has the charity experienced a data breach. This would also promote the Commission's move to becoming a more enabling regulator.

Appendix B

General administrative consents application form and consent letter

Forum expressed their thanks and appreciation to the casework team for giving them the opportunity to comment on these materials. They also welcomed this option for relevant charities, saying they think it will be really helpful.

Re the part of the application form that reads: To remove the need to seek the Commission's consent in future, you may wish to consider removing the clause in your governing document which states that it is required.

Do you also wish to remove the provision that states the Commission's consent is required?

Feedback from forum as this approach is optional:

1. Can the Commission's Model constitution also be amended to include this option while indicating that it is an option not a requirement.
2. On the landing page where this form is available can a sentence be added to say: If you are a charitable company and you want to make changes to your articles, you must use a different form.
3. Also suggested it would be helpful on the landing page to provide a few examples of why an unincorporated charity might choose this option. This would reassure some groups that they can choose not to do it and that they won't be doing anything wrong by not taking up this option.
4. possibly include a small explanatory note at the bottom of the application – as people tend to go straight to the form and may not read the notes on the landing page.

Appendix A

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8. possibly include a small explanatory note at the bottom of the application – as people tend to go straight to the form and may not read the notes on the landing page.

Update:

- 1) Model Constitution to remove the provision that refers to needing the Commission's consent – being updated.

Other changes under consideration.

Stakeholder forum – meeting note

Held online –Wednesday 22 February 2023 10:00am - Noon

Attendees:

Charlene Brooks	Parenting NI – Chairperson
Gerry McCurdy	Interim Chief Commissioner
Tony Clarke	Sport 360
Mary T Conway	Omagh Forum for Rural Associations
Denise Copeland	NICVA
Michele Crilly	Special Olympics Ulster
Conor Flanagan	Supporting Communities
Lorraine Griffin	COSTA
Clare Jenner	Parentkind
Lisa Keys	Boys Brigade NI
Bill Megraw	County Down Rural Community Network
Cara McCann	HERe NI
Valeria McConville	CO3
Brenda McMullan	Halifax Foundation
Derek Powell	Causeway Rural & Urban Network
Treasa Rice	Brain Injury Matters
Ashleigh Roberts	East Belfast Community Development Agency
Ann Breslin	CCNI – PDM, Notetaker.

Apologies:

Andrea Brown, Denise Hayward, Diarmuid Moore, Ian Simpson, Leslie-Anne Newton, Colin Hayburn, George Gillespie

Apologies received during the meeting: Louise Little, Emma Harte, caught on call, Catherine Cooke had IT issues when trying to join the meeting.

Ref	Item	Action point/Decision
1.	Apologies. Notes of previous meeting. Ann delivered a verbal update from DfC re introduction of the Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) structure in NI: The Department is in the process of developing a detailed action plan which will set out the sequencing of the implementation of the Independent Review	Decision: Note of meeting accepted. Two actions were carried over: AP1. Go back to Commission re the redaction of documents: when printed off the PDF of the Registration application does not have personal details. But AMR does have these details.

	recommendations, with Charitable Incorporated Organisations being included in these considerations.	AP2. Response from DfC Permanent Secretary to be circulated to all members.
2.	Introduction of new members	
At 10:20am the Commission's Communications officer joined the meeting and left the meeting at 11:10am.		
3.	<p>Update on review of website – discussion and feedback on website from forum members.</p> <p>Very valuable input was provided including:</p> <p>That an improved search function would be beneficial, one where it is clear if you are searching the website or the register.</p> <p>There is a diverse range of users, we need to think about all of their different needs and improving accessibility.</p> <p>The call forward and combined list might be improved with the addition of a town/location column so as not to confuse with other organisations.</p>	AP3. Communications officer to feedback to the website project team within the Commission. This feedback was also provided to the Board of Commissioners.
4.	Update from consultation re methods the Commission should use for engagement. Followed by discussion and feedback from forum members.	<p>Decision: When notes of meeting are distributed, they should indicate what information can be shared by the forum members with their membership organisations and contacts. I.E 'Here are x things we would like you to disseminate...'</p> <p>Decision: When membership organisations are responding to consultation, if they circulate a draft, will ask membership if they are content to add their name to it.</p>

		<p>AP 4 Stakeholder forum members to be invited to focus group to provide feedback to the consultation.</p> <p>AP 5 Suggestion that helper groups host consultation and engagement events to be added to the Commission’s engagement strategy.</p>
5.	Dates for meetings during 2023/24.	<p>Decision Anything pressing that any member wants added to next agenda, let Ann know. Charlene and Gerry will discuss at preparation meeting in advance of agenda being circulated.</p> <p>AP 6 Due to time constraints it was agreed that the Chairperson and Commission would meet to agree meeting dates based on the feedback from the forum and these would be circulated to the forum.</p>
6.	AOB: role of Vice Chair	<p>Due to personal circumstances the previously appointed VC has been unable to attend the forum and therefore there is a vacancy for the role of VC. The Interim Chief Commissioner and Chairperson will agree a process of election for the role.</p>

Prepared by: Ann Breslin.

Appendix 1 – Update on items carried over from December 2022 meeting.

General administrative consents application form and consent letter: Re the part of the application form that reads: To remove the need to seek the Commission's consent in future, you may wish to consider removing the clause in your governing document which states that it is required.

Do you also wish to remove the provision that states the Commission's consent is required?

Feedback from forum as this approach is optional:

1. On the landing page where this form is available can a sentence be added to say: If you are a charitable company and you want to make changes to your articles, you must use a different form. **Response: cannot be included, because a Company may also need to use the form to make amendments if they have included a provision that states our consent is required and it is outside of a regulated alteration.**
2. Also suggested it would be helpful on the landing page to provide a few examples of why an unincorporated charity might choose this option. This would reassure some groups that they can choose not to do it and that they won't be doing anything wrong by not taking up this option. **Text added to say that removal of provisions that say Commission's consent is required is entirely optional but will reduce unnecessary bureaucracy if it is removed.**
3. possibly include a small explanatory note at the bottom of the application – as people tend to go straight to the form and may not read the notes on the landing page. **Wording being developed.**

Update re redacting registration applications:

This was discussed with Head of Corporate services and IT. This would require a change request to our external IT suppliers. Unfortunately, there is no further development work being undertaken on online systems in light of the lack of capital budget in 23/24 and the need for a strategic approach to replacing the software which is nearing its end of life.

It is something that could be considered with the development of a replacement system. In the current form, if the charity wishes to share the document, then it is going to be up to them to manually redact any information that they do not wish to share.

Feedback on preferred meeting days, times and format of meetings.

20 responses

Two highest number of votes are in brackets

	Meeting 1	Meeting 2	Meeting 3	Meeting 4
Month	May (12) April (4)	Sept (12) Aug (6)	December (10) November (7)	No votes taken – suggest: 21 February
Day	Third Wednesday (13) Second Wednesday (8)	Third Wednesday (13) Second Wednesday (8)	Third Wednesday (13) Second Wednesday (8)	No votes taken
Time	10:00am – Noon (15) Two votes each for other options	10:00am – Noon (14) Two votes each for other options	10:00am – Noon (14) Two votes each for other options	No votes taken
Format: online/in person	Online (14) In person (3)	Online (11) In person (8)	Online (13) In person (5)	Online (13) In person (4)
Board meeting	26 June	25 Sept	Jan meeting (unless forum meets in November)	March